DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 302 RC 012 150

TITLE	U.S. Efforts to Educate and Train the Poor in Developing Countries. Report to the Congress of the United States by the Comptroller General.
INSTITUTION	Comptroller General of the U.S., Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	ID-80-18
PUB DATE	5 May 80
NOTE	66p.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. General Accounting Office, Distribution Section, Room 1518, 441 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20548 (single copies free, additional copies $1.00 each).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Vocational Education; Agency Cooperation; *Agency Role; Basic Skills; *Developing Nations; Educational Finance; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Information Needs; *International Programs; Leadership Training; Nonformal Education; Organizational Effectiveness; Postsecondary Education; Program Evaluation; *Rural Development; *Rural Education; *Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS	*Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

Agency for International Development (AID) education and training assistance to developing countries is herein reviewed by the General Accounting Office (GAO), with particular attention paid to the changes in emphasis since the 1973 New Directions Mandate by Congress and to the nature of recurring problems in improving education of the poor. One major problem for instance, is that even though primary school enrollment tripled during the 1950's and 1960's, the number of uneducated people in developing countries has soared due to spiraling population growth. The GAO recommends in this report that AID focus attention on three issues: (1) there should be increased involvement of the host governments in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of U.S. sponsored projects with greater emphasis on host-country ability to carry out implementation and sustain recurring costs; (2) more effective use of AID's 20 years of experience in planning, designing, and carrying out education development projects is needed to help develop relevant learning opportunities for the poor majority in these nations; (3) closer coordination and cooperation of external donors among themselves and with recipient governments is necessary to ascertain the most essential education development needs and to best use all available resources in meeting those needs. (AN)

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BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

ED190302

U.S Efforts To Educate And Train The Poor In Developing Countries

Education is vital to successful social and economic progress of developing countries. Although the Agency for International Development has contributed to impressive gains in primary and secondary schools, rapid population growth is swelling the number of uneducated, unskilled, poor people. Agency efforts to help educate and train the poor face persistent problems, such as teacher and materials shortages, inappropriate curricula, and securing recipients' commitment to and involvement in U.S.-sponsored projects.

This report contains recommendations to improve U.S. efforts to transfer knowledge and skills to the poor in developing countries.

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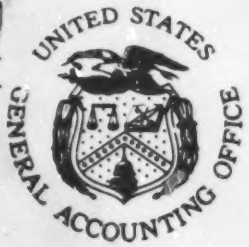

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-198342

To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report describes Agency for International Development education and training assistance to developing countries, particularly the changes in emphasis since the 1973 New Directions mandate and the nature of recurring problems in improving education of the poor.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and to the Administrator, Agency for International Development.

Comptroller General
of the United States

AUG 4 1980

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

U.S. EFFORTS TO EDUCATE AND TRAIN THE POOR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

D I G E S T

Problems plague Agency for International Development (AID) efforts to develop skills among the poor people in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Near East. Even though child enrollment in primary schools tripled during the 1950s and 1960s, the number of uneducated people in developing countries has soared due to spiraling population growth. Today, one billion adults remain functionally illiterate and outside the reach of most education systems.

Since 1960, the United States, through AID, has programed over $3 billion to improve education and human resources in developing countries. Other developed nations and international organizations have also invested heavily in educational improvements in the Third World.

The Congress has been concerned over the past decade about the extent to which U.S. assistance reaches the poor in developing countries. That concern was reflected in the 1973 New Directions Mandate requiring a strategy for U.S. assistance to meet the basic human needs of the poor, including education. Yet, today AID has not completed an agencywide policy for education and human resources program guidance.

OBSTACLES TO EDUCATING THE POOR

AID faces many obstacles in attempting to improve the education of the poor in developing countries. Recipient governments, and often the poor people themselves, do not commit resources needed to implement the U.S.-sponsored projects. Determining the appropriate types of delivery systems and curricula needed to present relevant learning opportunities to the poor is another problem. The administrative and logistical

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problems encountered in supplying and maintaining learning materials to users in remote areas of developing countries or even in capital cities have an adverse effect on education and human resource development. (See ch. 3.)

BETTER USE OF AGENCY MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The Agency has not effectively recorded and used its 20 years of experience in designing, programing, and implementing education and human resource projects in developing countries. Projects currently being implemented often do not build on past projects where appropriate. Many development problems or obstacles encountered currently are similar to previous experiences, but AID's management system does not adequately reflect these experiences in an easily accessible, usable form. (See ch. 2.)

USE OF TRAINED PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Agency officials have reported that about 190,000 people have traveled to the United States and third countries since the late 1940s for training. Yet the shortage of qualified local people to effectively carry out development projects continues to hinder development of many countries. This shortage stems partially from the impact of "brain drain"--the exit of skills from developing countries. AID officials state that less than one percent of the sponsored training participants do not return home, and they contend that the low nonreturn ratio shows that the contribution of AID's training program to brain drain is negligible. However, the Agency cannot fully support that position. It has been estimated that as many as half of all participants are not included in statistics representing those reported returning home after completing training abroad. Furthermore, the Agency does not adequately follow up on participants

to evaluate their contributions to development and, more specifically, the impact of U.S. spending upon the intended target group--the poor. (See ch. 4.)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AID can improve U.S. efforts in transferring skills to the poor in developing countries through

--greater involvement of recipient governments and communities in all project stages and

--better use of past experience and cross-sector expertise in planning future projects and teaming with other donors to jointly attack education and human resource problems in developing countries.

GAO recognizes that the Agency has begun to give serious attention to many areas discussed in this report and is developing a policy statement on future U.S. education assistance. However, GAO recommends that the Administrator, Agency for International Development,

--increase recipient-government involvement in identifying, designing, implementing, and evaluating U.S.-supported projects;

--place greater emphasis on the host-country's ability to carry projects through the implementation phase and to sustain recurring costs;

--encourage joint planning and execution of education-related programs among all donors;

--assure that program planners obtain substantive information on experiences gained in prior and ongoing education projects that directly relate to current programs;

--prepare additional guidance for program planners to obtain needed information in such areas as the effects on the poor; and

--establish procedures for exchanging plans, programs, and project designs among the various functional sectors to assure coordination and development of the best program and country strategies.

GAO also recommends that an agencywide system of accountability of arrivals in and departures from the United States, as well as the application of training received, be developed for overall management and evaluation of the participant training program.

The GAO letter report to the Administrator, AID (B-197090, Jan. 4, 1980), contains more details on this program's information system.

GAO believes that establishing an agencywide policy, stating the emphasis and direction of future U.S. education and human resource assistance to developing countries, should be important to better program such assistance. Therefore, GAO urges that the final clearance or approval of such a policy be expedited.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO RESPONSE

AID officials agreed with most of GAO's conclusions and recommendations but felt that the report does not sufficiently distinguish between past and current Agency practices, particularly in the areas of host-government involvement and the use of prior AID experience.

They also believe that GAO over-emphasizes the role of the AID participant training program in the brain drain phenomenon.

In the report, GAO has clarified references to past and current Agency practices. GAO

also recognizes that AID's contribution to the overall brain drain problem is minimal. However, observations and recommendations in this report on the participant training program, if acted upon, will improve program management and provide better accountability of all AID-sponsored participants.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFGRAD	African Graduate Fellowship Program
AFL-CIO	American Federation Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFSA	African Scholarship Association
AID	Agency for International Development
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labor Development
ASPAU	African Scholarship Program at American Universities
CDSS	Country Development Strategy Statement
GAO	General Accounting Office
LASPAU	Latin American Scholarship Program at American Universities
OIT	Office of International Training, AID
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 1

EDUCATION AND ITS PERSPECTIVES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Education is a vital element in the successful socio-economic development of a country. Ignorance and illiteracy hinder developing-country economic development and block the poor from participating in and benefiting from economic development. In positive terms, experience has shown that

--as farmers learn new and better farming techniques, agricultural production increases;

--when people learn and adopt better health, nutrition and sanitation practices, family health improves;

--as women acquire more education, birth rates tend to fall;

--as people gain practical, marketable skills, off-farm employment expands; and

--when managers and administrators are well trained, they carry out their responsibilities more effectively.

The United States, directly through AID and indirectly through public and private international organizations, has become one of many donors improving education systems in developing countries. AID has programed over $3 billion for educational development since 1960, including monies from the Agency's education account, and for education components of projects in other major functional areas. Other bilateral donors, the World Bank, and U.N. affiliate organizations have programed larger amounts than the United States for educational development in poor nations.

The ultimate impact of all current development efforts directed at education is difficult to assess. Much evidence to which donors can relate their educational development efforts may not appear for decades, particularly in the formal education area. Yet donors agree that long-term investments to educate the masses in developing countries--beginning at the basic primary and pre-primary levels--are essential.

This report discusses the changing nature of this assistance and developing-country education needs over the past decade. It also highlights the current major issues in education assistance.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Expanding educational opportunities began as a major effort in the 1950s. From 1950 to 1970 the number of children from developing countries enrolled in primary schools increased from 65 million to 201 million. In 1960, 30 percent of the children in developing countries were enrolled in school. By 1975, enrollment had risen to 52 percent, yet the rapid increase in the school-age population has caused the absolute number of uneducated people to soar.

Expansion before 1970 concentrated on building upon traditional and outmoded education systems. More people benefited as schools become accessible. However, the problem of reaching the large masses continued. As it became evident that traditional systems were not meeting essential development needs, developing countries and external donors began to reassess their educational priorities and available resources in the following areas: (1) literacy--defined as basic competence in reading, writing and arithmetic; (2) greater educational opportunities; and (3) higher-level professional, technical, and administrative training in development areas, including the creation of an institutional capability to produce such specialists.

Despite the common goal to improve education, the emphasis on higher education continued. In 1973, the Congress expressed the concern that

> "United States bilateral development assistance should give the highest priority to undertakings submitted by host governments which directly improve the lives of the poorest of their people and their capacity to participate in the development of their countries." 1/

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, has recently authorized funds

--to expand and strengthen nonformal education

1/The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 1973, Chapter 1, Section 102.

methods, especially those designed to improve productive skills of rural families and the urban poor and to provide them useful information;

--to increase the relevance of formal education systems to the needs of the poor, especially at the primary level, through reform of curricula, teaching materials, and teaching methods, and through improved teacher training; and

--to strengthen the management capabilities of institutions which enable the poor to participate in development.

In August 1979, the act also specifically authorized assistance for advanced training and education of people in developing countries in disciplines required for planning and implementing public and private development activities.

Formal vs. nonformal education

AID has encouraged recipient governments to seek nonformal approaches to solving the education problems of the rural poor. Formal education offers a structured program of institutional learning with varied learning activities, including the traditional primary and secondary levels, with a degree obtained upon completion. In nonformal education, a nondegree-structured program is presented in a noninstitutional setting, usually within the participants' immediate environment, with program content specifically related to participant occupation and/or lifestyle.

Nonformal education is not a substitute for formal education. The two serve different educational needs and different groups of people. Formal primary schooling for children is the best means of teaching basic literacy and numerical skills. Nonformal education can best meet the specific educational needs of adults and youth not in school in a relatively short timeframe.

To increase effectiveness, the two education methods can be complementary. For example, literacy training becomes more relevant for farmers when incorporated into an agricultural training program, as in a rural agriculture project in Liberia. Paraprofessionals and community volunteers from nonformal education can be used to provide primary education to small children. That approach has been successfully tried in the Philippines and Indonesia.

INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION

Development assistance funds

During the period 1960-70, AID invested about $1.8 billion in education--about 6.6 percent of the total AID programs--for 70 developing countries. Of this amount, $1.38 billion--about 5 percent of the total AID programs--was for education sector activities, and $423 million was for education in other development areas, including agriculture, health, and labor. About half of the total obligations was for the development of institutions of professional and higher education. In addition, some 170 U.S. universities, under AID contracts, provided undergraduate and graduate education for about 70,000 developing-country participants.

Since 1970, AID has committed approximately $1.6 billion to education development, including sizeable amounts from the food and nutrition, health, and population sectors. In recent years, expenditures for education have ranged between $70 million and $100 million annually, but these funds have averaged 8 percent of all development assistance compared to 5 percent during the earlier 1960-70 period.

The growth in education spending is more apparent in the other development sectors. Education-related expenditures have increased in the training of health and agricultural extention workers, and in the development of agricultural schools, for example. If these activities are included as part of AID assistance to education, AID estimates that the 8-percent ratio jumps to 30 or 40 percent. These ratios suggest substantial increases over the 6.6 percent calculated for the 1960-70 period.

In recent years, AID has generally programed the education and human resources fund in six broad categories. Primary school development and out-of-school adult and community vocational education receive about 50 percent of the funds. Higher education in the areas of professional and scientific studies, administration, and management receives about 30 percent, while the remaining funds are for free and democratic labor movements in developing countries.

As indicated above, additional monies for education become available to AID from appropriations designated for other primary development assistance, such as food and nutrition and population planning and health. Funds allocated to international narcotics control projects, selected development problems and other specific types of development

activities are also used for training. AID has estimated that approximately 20 percent of the food and nutrition and health funds, and 50 percent of the population monies, are committed each year to education or training for programs in the other development areas. For instance, the AID Bureau for Africa projected that the 1979 education and human resource development funding levels in Africa would reach nearly $61 million and that about one-third of that amount would directly affect food and nutrition, health, and other activities. The Bureau further estimates that major activities in the other functional areas, totaling another $60 million, have significant education and human resource development features.

Other funds available

AID also uses Security Supporting Assistance funds to finance certain education activities. Section 531 of the Foreign Assistance Act authorizes the provision of economic assistance to support or promote economic or political stability. Funds also go to a variety of other activities specifically directed at meeting the needs of the poor.

To illustrate, AID provided the Government of Jordan with a $7 million loan to construct 18 schools, of which eight were completed as of May 31, 1979. A $6 million rural vocational education project underway in Portugal will expand teaching and research facilities at four rural institutes. AID officials also have plans for a $30 million project to assist the Government of Egypt in improving basic education, including curriculum, materials, teacher training and facilities. Furthermore, AID estimates that over 40 percent of the proposed projects for Egypt in fiscal year 1980 contain training features expected to cost more than $39 million. Training component allocations for Jordan and Syria are estimated at $9 million and $7 million, respectively, for the same period.

CURRENT PROGRAMING

The overall AID education and human resource development program includes efforts to

--provide teacher training and improve curriculum content,

--provide the poor with vocational and technical training,

--initiate and encourage education outreach to the rural poor,

--fund general training for mid- and high-level administrators and management, and

--furnish construction and equipment to further education in selected developing countries.

Such activities are generally spread throughout the various levels of education--primary, secondary/vocational, post-secondary and nonformal at the adult and community levels.

In broad terms, about 50 percent of AID education and human resource development funds are committed annually to programs directed at formal and nonformal education at the primary and community level in developing countries. AID reports that nearly one-third of the monies go to post-secondary education, and the remaining funds support assistance to free and democratic labor movements in developing countries.

AID programing in other functional areas, such as food and nutrition, health, and population planning in recent years has called for educational or training components in nearly all nonresearch-type projects. That trend will probably continue in the foreseeable future.

Several issues face education development efforts in developing countries. Authorities say that many development problems today were recognized over a decade ago. We recognize that AID is only one of many organizations involved in improving education systems in developing countries, and we agree that many of the education development problems will continue for years. Yet educators agree and experience shows that improved learning is essential for successful social and economic development. Therefore, the United States should continue to place high priority on education and training efforts overseas.

In this report, we have not attempted to address all the prior, present, and future difficulties affecting AID education development efforts. Neither have we tried to develop solutions to persistent problems. We believe, however, that in the interest of educational progress in development, AID should focus attention on the following issues, which are summarized below and discussed more fully in ensuing chapters of this report.

1. In planning and designing projects, more attention is needed on developing-country governments' lack of financial and human

resources to adequately support externally sponsored development projects and to absorb the eventual recurring costs.

2. More effective use of AID's 20 years of experience in planning, designing, and carrying out education development projects is needed in developing relevant learning opportunities for the poor majority in developing countries. Past experience should lead to developing better and more innovative teaching methods, improving production and distribution of teaching materials, and designing more relevant curricula.

3. Closer coordination and cooperation of external donors among themselves and with recipient developing-country governments is necessary to

   --ascertain the most essential education development needs and

   --best use all available resources in meeting those needs.

CHAPTER 2

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

In the 1950s and 1960s, education in developing countries concentrated on expanding traditional education systems. Since the mid 1960s, development activities have begun to reflect a search for new delivery systems more efficient and effective than before with an emphasis on meeting the learning needs of the rural poor.

Current AID efforts are to provide basic education for children and basic life skills for adults. The Agency is now drafting a policy statement which, when approved, will offer some general guidance to program planners. Additional guidance dealing with some of the more difficult problems of education in developing countries is planned. We believe, however, that AID should expedite establishing an agencywide policy and completing the planned guidance paper.

AID recognizes that a combined donor effort is essential to tackling the education needs of the poor. However, much coordination deals with avoiding actual project duplication rather than joint, forward planning and execution which we believe would lead to better use of donor resources. This chapter discusses AID, developing-country government, and other donor involvement in strategy development and project implementation.

AID STRATEGY IN EDUCATION

Current efforts toward an overall AID policy in education began with the AID Education Program Strategy published in September 1973. The strategy paper was keyed to certain problems in education technology, nonformal education, and educational financial resources. It designated four areas of education program development: (1) education economics and analysis, (2) educational technology, (3) nonformal education, and (4) strengthening higher education for national development.

In December 1975, AID advanced toward developing an overall policy for activities by declaring in a handbook that

> "LDC governments will need to make their total education and human resource systems more efficient and effective in support of development,

exploring new and traditional nonformal education alternatives, as well as means to improve, expand or re-orient their formal education institutions."

AID suggested that the missions begin moving in that direction by (1) identifying common developing-country and AID goals, (2) analyzing how these goals will affect developing-country learning needs, and (3) determining the extent to which existing activities are actually meeting these needs.

The suggested process then required that all economic, political, and cultural constraints to meeting the goals be recognized. An analysis of this information was to serve as the basis for the plan and design of an education program. A final step in developing the education and human resource program required the coordination with other development sectors to assure that the program related to actual and potential work opportunities and needs.

AID completed the sixth draft of a new education policy paper in December 1979, which provides general guidance to program planners for developing education strategies. The paper also addresses the following priority learning needs of the poor:

--basic education for children consisting of functional literacy, numerical skills, and an elementary understanding of science and the environment, and

--basic life skills for adults to improve the performance of family, work, and societal roles.

This current proposed policy paper also deals with widely accepted issue areas faced by developing countries. The following are brief summaries of these issues with examples of AID projects aimed at resolving the problems.

Access

In many poor developing countries, primary education reaches only a small proportion of the eligible school-age population. For example, in Haiti only 28 percent of the children aged 5 to 14 are enrolled in primary school. In Upper Volta and Niger, the percentage for the 6 to 11 age group is 14 and 17 percent, respectively.

Many developing countries do not have resources to broaden the access to education. They are unable to finance expansion of existing primary systems to include more schools, teachers, and facilities. Convenient and appropriate learning opportunities for adults are sometimes inaccessible, particularly in the sparsely populated rural areas.

Radio can potentially improve access to education, particularly in the rural areas where distance is critical. In Nicaragua, daily 30 minute radio broadcasts attract children's interest and involvement in mathematics. Evaluators have found that more significant achievements have been gained through radio instruction than from traditional instruction.

Constructing new facilities is also important in improving children's access to primary education. AID is assisting the Guatemalan Government with loans to construct rural schools and to reconstruct schools decimated by earthquake damage in 1976. In addition, under a basic rural education project, AID is assisting the Guatemalan Government in planning and developing its education capability. This capability will ultimately reach small farmers and their families who now have no access to formal education.

A rural information services project is expanding basic life skills for adults and youth out of school in Liberia. Radio will link the services of Ministries and field personnel with more Liberian people, now unreachable. Further, in Peru, the AID Education Service Centers project will experiment with techniques to improve and extend the coverage of educational services to disadvantaged students and adults. The project will focus on centralizing educational services and facilities within school districts.

Equity

Inequities in the distribution of educational opportunities are widespread in developing countries. Opportunities in urban areas are greater and of higher quality than those available in rural areas. Historically, the rich have more access to education than the poor; males have greater access to education than females.

Female enrollment is far below male enrollment. Although the number of children attending primary school has risen significantly, females attend school from one-half to one-tenth as frequently as males of similar ages. In fact, women and girls are less likely to enter school and are more likely to

drop out because of social and economic pressures. Low female attendance is apparent not only at the primary and secondary levels, but at the university level as well. To overcome such education inequities in Morocco, AID is helping train women in basic education and marketable skills through the Nonformal Education for Women project, and through Industrial and Commercial Job Training for Women--a more advanced, companion project.

Relevancy

Some developing countries have inappropriate primary school curricula, and they often lack sufficient and appropriate learning materials, such as textbooks. Further, learning objectives are not always integrated with other overall country-development objectives. Thus, the immediate benefits from newly acquired skills or knowledge are not readily seen. For an occupational and vocational skills training program to be successful, jobs must be available to trainees.

The Basic Village Education project in Guatemala is an example of reaching the rural poor with relevant programs. This project, completed in 1978, uses radio to communicate how rural adults can improve their economies and ability to be hired in agricultural occupations. Radio provides them opportunities to continue their education. The program also reaches many of the rural population and does not require that the target groups be literate.

As another example, the Improved Efficiency of Learning project in Liberia focuses on the major shortcoming of the Liberian formal education system--poor quality instruction. Programed learning materials and improved teaching techniques are expected to lead to a more relevant, cost-effective system under this project.

Cultural, language, and social differences create problems which primary school systems must deal with in instructing many rural children. A bilingual education project in Peru, for instance, is designed to address the communication barriers of the Indian children by developing learning materials, and training teachers for bilingual instruction. The new curricula will include bicultural aspects, as well. AID expects drop-out and repeater rates to decline as the program progresses.

Community participation

To be an integral component of people's lives, education must require the active and full participation of community resources. Participation is essentially encouraged by the full use of local resources. For basic education, essential resources include construction and maintenance of schools, the involvement of local people as community educational aides, and the payment of teachers and aides--either in kind or in cash. For adults, learning occurs best in a collaborative environment when instructors and learners engage in open discussions and community groups share compatible concerns.

We visited two nonformal, preschool education project sites in Peru. We observed the active participation of parents and community members in constructing the facilities, creating instructional aids from local materials, and selecting instructors from the communities to teach children and adults. Decisions affecting school curricula and management were made locally by community leaders and school principals.

In addition, a private voluntary organization in Peru, Fe y Alegria, is developing and expanding manual skills training programs for poor adults and youth. The communities in which Fe y Alegria operates appear willing to absorb a reasonable share of overall project costs, including inkind contributions for construction. Students and parents have also assumed responsibility for supplying the workshop with expendable materials.

Cost effectiveness

Meeting the learning needs of developing countries requires seeking the most cost-effective educational approaches. Such approaches may require reallocation of resources and priorities, a departure from traditional approaches, and improved instruction. Effective programing of scarce resources available to education is important. Cost-effective approaches to education are especially needed at secondary and postsecondary levels.

The use of radio with correspondence has demonstrated one way to reduce costs dramatically. Teachers meet with students only occasionally, so teacher salary costs are reduced. The radio, therefore, can sometimes substitute for untrained, unavailable teachers. Known as "distance learning" systems, radio education is beginning in Liberia.

AID is also funding a $3-million project in Indonesia for students in grades four through six to demonstrate the

validity of self-instructional materials as an economical approach to education. The unit cost of instruction is expected to decline 30 to 40 percent.

Other policy areas

AID's proposed education policy paper also addresses higher education, development administration, and recurrent cost financing. Support to higher education concerns overcoming critical personnel shortages in health, agriculture, education, planning, and administration. The proposed AID policy requires that for such assistance to be justified it must

--not adversely affect the flow to lower levels of education, such as basic education for children and life skills for adults;

--be the best alternative for meeting the workforce requirement being addressed; and

--make a major contribution toward overcoming inequities in the distribution of higher educational opportunities for the poor and for women.

The intended policy goal of development administration is to overcome inadequate managerial and administrative staff by changing practices and programs which adversely affect the development process. The strategy emphasis is on training.

AID recognizes the severity of critical manpower shortages in developing countries. One analysis showed that over half the AID manpower development budget goes to higher education. AID officials further stated that according to World Bank estimates, the vast majority of all bilateral and multilateral education assistance goes into higher education.

On recurrent cost financing, AID is prepared to fund such costs if a strong need exists which cannot otherwise be met. Each request for recurrent costs financing is to be individually judged on its merits.

Region- and country-specific education strategy

AID policy statements are to serve as a guide in formulating region- and country-specific education strategy. As of January 2, 1980, however, the proposed policy had not been approved. While AID has been operating without an official overall policy since the "new directions" was mandated, the

Office of Education in the Development Support Bureau has served as an overall coordinator between the geographic bureaus and as an advisor on education technology matters. The Africa Bureau is the only geographic bureau with a regional policy in the absence of Agency policy or strategy statement.

As a guidance mechanism, some geographic bureaus have prepared country-specific education sector assessments for many developing countries. These assessments are used as the basis for identifying projects and program strategy. Education assessments and strategy statements also provide input to the individual Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS). The CDSS--a document prepared and used agencywide--outlines the proposed 5-year assistance strategy and proposed AID levels. The plan, updated annually, examines the development progress, commitment, and level of donor assistance in each country.

The strategy developed by the Africa Bureau parallels the overall Agency policy of basic education for children and basic life skills for rural people. The African strategy also includes low- and mid-level management training, because Bureau officials believe that training at those management levels is necessary in planning, implementing, and evaluating rural programs.

BETTER CROSS-SECTOR PLANNING

Many population, health, agriculture, and nutrition projects include education or training components. In fact, education and training expenditures in other sectors exceed such expenditures under the Education and Human Resources account. The activities in other development sectors are important to the education sector. Because the activities of all sectors are interrelated, coordination is essential. Yet, some AID field officials indicate that little coordination takes place. This failure to coordinate can lead to wasted human and financial resources.

Each program officer is familiar with the needs and opportunities within his/her sector, but where training and education overlap or depend on other sectors for success, the advice of others should be sought. For example, the education expert can offer suggestions for designing projects to provide pre-natal care information to expectant mothers, and the rural-development officer can advise youth on available employment opportunities if particular training curricula are introduced.

As a continuous planning practice to optimize limited resources and abundant experience, AID must establish procedures for exchanging plans, programs, and project designs among the various sectors. We suggest that during the yearly preparation of the annual budget submission and the CDSS, the mission program planners document that projects represent collaborative efforts.

BUILDING ON PAST PROJECTS AND PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Knowledge of the successes and failures of previous projects can be useful in (1) determining what might or might not work, (2) providing a base to expand upon, and (3) guiding future assistance levels.

As far back as the mid 1940s, AID and its predecessor agencies have been involved in education. Yet, the AID information systems are incomplete, and evaluations are inadequate. We recognize that many AID people have knowledge of prior programs. However, what would otherwise be valuable information to the Agency is unused or unretained for future project and program planning.

AID contends that past AID experience is not always relevant for present project programing. We found, however, that some projects currently being implemented do not build upon past projects where they could. For example, the Improved Efficiency of Learning project in Liberia is to train teachers in the techniques of programed instruction. The project appears not to build upon a prior AID project, the Teacher Training Institutional Development project (1960-69), which set up two teacher training colleges in rural Liberia. The Improved Efficiency of Learning project is located in facilities in rural Liberia separate from the teacher training colleges. We feel it would have been more cost-effective as well as more logistically sound for the Improved Efficiency of Learning project to be located at the site of one of the teacher training colleges.

Information systems

The effectiveness of development assistance efforts largely depends on the quality and availability of information to managers in making program and project decisions. AID does not have an effective system for collecting and disseminating information, nor does it assure that program planners are utilizing that which is available.

Before visiting the AID missions, we requested data in Washington on the design and evaluation of each mission's education and training projects. The data received from the Office of Development Information and Utilization, AID's institutional memory of recorded information, proved to be inaccurate and incomplete.

In some cases, changes to project design and summaries of project evaluations had not been reported or entered into the system. Mission officials were often not familiar with projects completed or near completion prior to their arrival at the mission, despite the fact that project titles or descriptions were similar to ongoing projects. Project files were also incomplete. Furthermore, mission officials said they did not routinely contact the Office of Development Information and Utilization for background data on education or training activities sponsored by AID or other donors in their region or elsewhere.

The poor recording of information in AID's formal system is offset partly by the knowledge retained by individual AID education specialists, particularly those in the Office of Education. These specialists are usually available and can provide valuable insight on the history of prior AID education projects. Building upon past experience, however, requires having well-documented information systems. AID should explore ways of retaining basic information on past projects, including critical assessments, at the mission and require that project planners look at the past before they plan the future.

Evaluations

AID projects are to be evaluated in terms of their efficiency, effectiveness, and significance in contributing to the accomplishment of program objectives. We believe AID should go beyond the individual project evaluation and evaluate entire programs, particularly their impact on meeting the basic needs of the poor.

Recognizing the need to report to the Congress on program accomplishments, the Acting AID Administrator sent a memorandum in July 1979 to the assistant administrators of the regional bureaus criticizing current and past congressional presentations. He said:

> "I found a continuing tendency toward progress reports progress reports on implementation matters, training programs, institution building, host-country programing and resource allocation,

and other intermediate activities rather than impact on people. We continue, perhaps by habit, to concentrate on the means and not the ends of development."

For future reporting, he requested that bureau presentations cover changes in target group economic and social activity, production, and recipient-government policies and investments, for each sector by country and by region. To the extent possible, the bureaus were asked to include evidence that accomplishments were caused by, attributable to, or associated with AID development assistance.

DONOR COORDINATION

AID alone is not able to effectively develop the education and human resources of developing countries. Neither do the Peace Corps, the World Bank, United Nations affiliated organizations, or the governments of other developed nations have the capability to accomplish the task singlehandedly. A combination of external donor efforts in a coordinated manner, however, would make the task more attainable.

In an earlier report,1/ we discussed efforts underway to make a joint AID/Peace Corps operation in developing countries a more productive development effort. We reiterate the importance of AID/Peace Corps collaboration in continuing to transfer technology and skills to people in developing countries.

We saw no evidence in mission files of AID/Peace Corps coordination and/or cooperation relative to any AID-sponsored education and human resource projects. In Liberia, we were made aware of about 80 Peace Corps volunteers (about 40 percent of the volunteers in the country) working in the area of education. The director of the AID mission there said that a dialogue is maintained with Peace Corps, regarding current and future projects. We were told of small commodities provided to Peace Corps in Liberia by AID. We did not, however, see evidence that AID and Peace Corps were involved in joint program planning to more effectively use their available resources, to the mutual benefit of the United States and the recipient countries.

1/ "U.S. Development Assistance To The Sahel--Progress and Problems," (ID-79-9, Mar. 29, 1979).

Degrees of coordination and cooperation appeared between AID missions and the international development community in selected Latin American and African countries. Formal donor coordination through the office of the UNDP Resident Representative was evident in all countries. These formal donor contacts were supplemented by informal discussions among external donors on particular issues or projects. With some exceptions, however, simply avoiding project duplication seemed to be the principal motive for the coordination.

In Peru, AID and UNICEF have joined to provide low-cost education to disadvantaged children in the highlands and urban slums. UNICEF has supported this project for several years. Much of the work is done by volunteers in the very communities where the intended beneficiaries live.

Currently, the Liberian Government, AID, and the World Bank are jointly engaged in an integrated rural development project aimed at increasing the production of cocoa, coffee, and both upland and swamp rice. Of the estimated $20.3 million project costs, the recipient government is to provide $7.3 million; AID, $6 million; and the World Bank, $7 million. The World Bank is funding the training portion of this project. Training is to include short, formal courses and practical field training, as well as training facilities for extension, cooperative, and credit field staff.

Agency officials recognize the soundness of the donor coordination principle, but term it difficult to carry out. Furthermore, they said that it is difficult to attribute project success specifically to donor coordination.

We did not assess the success or failure of particular joint development efforts cited above. However, the coordination principle appears sound, and we believe that joint efforts should be explored in other developing countries.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last decade, AID has changed its education program to be more responsive to the needs of the poor. Basic education for children and basic life skills for adults are emphasized not only in AID strategy, but also in the goals of other donors and the developing countries themselves.

The Agency's draft policy offers general guidance to program planners; however, until the policy receives official approval, it will not be fully utilized agencywide as a required planning document. To assure proper implementation of

the Foreign Assistance Act and AID education goals, a final review and quick approval of the draft policy paper is needed.

Many development activities underway, supported by AID and other donors, are testing and evaluating new techniques to improve access, equity, relevancy, participation, and cost-effectiveness. The results of these projects should be closely coordinated and carefully reviewed to obtain full benefit from scarce donor resources. Successful applications should be communicated to AID missions in all developing countries. Overall, the AID education program is consistent with the goals of host governments and other donors, and the Foreign Assistance Act. AID is experimenting with approaches to solving the education needs of the rural poor which are innovative and hopefully, in the long run, more cost-effective.

The development problems or obstacles discussed throughout this report indicate that AID's progress in improving the education systems of developing countries is often hindered by factors beyond AID's immediate control. However, experiences from over 20 years of designing, programing, and implementing education and human resource projects in developing countries have not been effectively recorded and used. Most current development problems were experienced previously, and they will continue to recur. AID and other external donors can better attack them by cataloging and using critical assessments of both prior successes and failures.

In designing and programing education and human resource projects in developing countries, AID must limit assistance to the absorptive capacities of the recipient governments and people. We also believe experience has demonstrated that the recipient governments and people must be extensively involved in all phases of development efforts. They must be willing to commit their own resources to the same development endeavor as AID. We believe that a step toward success is the appearance of the attitude among people in developing countries that the development project is "our project and if it fails it is our fault."

We believe there are several ways in which AID can improve its program management. We therefore recommend that the AID Administrator require the designers, programers, and implementers of U.S.-supported education and human resource projects to

--assure that AID program planners collect and maintain substantive information on experiences gained in previous and current projects that directly relate to current programs;

--prepare additional guidance for AID program planners in subject areas where they have indicated more information is needed, such as how programs affect the poor;

--establish procedures for exchanging information on programs and project designs among the various functional sectors; and

--assure that joint project planning and execution take place among all donors in education.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSE

AID officials contend that the agency has always supported close coordination with other donors whenever possible. However, they point out that each donor agency has special objectives and emphases, planning cycles within agencies differ considerably, and most other donor agencies have relatively small staffs in the field, where the bulk of AID planning occurs. Despite these constraints, we believe that AID should assess the benefits of joint project planning and execution and seek closer collaboration with other donors.

AID officials also questioned the scope and focus of this review. We focused this review on the major education issues involved in U.S. development assistance. While we agree with AID that workforce and organizational considerations are important in administering development assistance, we believe that these matters would be more thoroughly addressed in a separate review focused on AID workforce and organization effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3

OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

Some notable successes have been accomplished in improving the education of developing countries. However, the recipient countries, AID, and other donors must overcome several obstacles to educational progress to achieve socioeconomic development in such countries. Recipient governments sometimes lack commitment and, more often, financial resources and the administrative ability to support and maintain projects initiated by external donors. Educational content and approaches in developing countries are often unsuited to the needs of poor rural communities. Project planning is often ineffective because developing countries lack an adequate information base. These problems at times are exacerbated by the inherent lack of professionally trained people, which slows the ability of developing countries to carry out development activities on their own.

INADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AND APPROACH

Educational needs within developing countries are generally different from those of developed countries. Endemic to education in developing countries are outmoded school systems, shortages of trained teachers, inadequate methodologies, irrelevant curricula, scarcities of textbooks, and language barriers--obstacles which impede development progress in education.

Outmoded school systems

School systems in many developing countries are products of colonial heritages, based on Western experience, and thus not relevant to all the needs of developing countries. In many cases, these systems are designed to prepare students for higher education, based on the assumption that most students will progress from primary to secondary levels. Such systems will not meet the needs of developing countries, because many students never reach the secondary levels.

Formal education reaches less than half the primary and lower secondary school-age population (6-14 years) in most developing countries. Furthermore, it consumes an average of between one-sixth and one-fifth of the national budgets and between four and ten percent of gross domestic products. Despite this relatively heavy burden of formal education, actual per student expenditures, particularly for primary

education, remain extremely low. In many of the poorest countries, less than twenty dollars each year is spent on a child enrolled in primary school.

Statistics from Liberia are illustrative. Only 32 percent of school-age children attend school, of which only 26 percent can be expected to complete the primary cycle. Only 11 percent will even finish high school. Thus, resources spent on postprimary education reach only a very small portion of the population.

Developing countries cannot effectively expand their traditional school systems, because their needs are more broadly based. With extremely low literacy rates, developing countries need to provide more basic education to more people. They cannot afford to spend a greater share of their educational resources financing higher level education systems for a relatively small percent of the population. Higher education costs in developing countries are estimated to be 20 times more per student than at the primary school level. A trade-off must be made to provide more education for those presently outside the system and to defer or find alternate means of funding better education for those already in the system.

Teacher shortages

Developing countries must cope with shortages of trained teachers. Many students in developing countries are taught by teachers with little or no formal teacher training, a problem especially acute at the primary level and in the rural areas.

In Liberia, for example, only 29 percent of the total teaching force of 7,182 teachers have college-level training. Furthermore, 50 percent of the trained teachers are in or near Monrovia, the capital, which has only about 25 percent of the country's school enrollment. Inadequately trained teachers are prevalent at the elementary level, where students require utmost motivation, encouragement, and proper professional handling.

The average pupil-to-trained-teacher ratio in Liberia is 104:1 at the elementary level and 47:1 and 64:1 at the junior high and high school levels. Realistic assessments of this situation indicate that Liberia cannot afford to formally train enough teachers for their needs within the foreseeable future. Liberian colleges and institutions graduate about 360 teachers each year, not enough to satisfy the needs.

With an annual growth rate of 8 percent in the school-attending population, the proposed enrollment for grades one through six in 1990 is expected to exceed 300,000, requiring at least 7,500 teachers. The total costs of producing these required teachers would be $41,610,000 between 1979-90. Liberia may not be able to afford these costs.

Developing countries without the resources to furnish enough teachers cannot afford traditional methods of improving teacher quality. They must seek alternative and innovative ways to upgrade the skills of teachers already in the school systems. AID is beginning to implement the Improved Efficiency of Learning project in Liberia, which is based on programed instruction. Programed instruction includes teaching/learning procedures which use individual learning materials in forms which can be taught in a 4-week workshop to unqualified and underqualified teachers. Because programed instruction is individual and self-paced, it is possible to have many more students under the tutelage of one teacher without jeopardizing the quality of education.

Inadequate teaching methods

Teaching methodologies in developing countries are often inappropriate for their needs. Rote memorization rather than analytical thinking is often emphasized, even though the latter is important for solving development problems. Teachers tend to be autocratic, and students learn through intimidation. For example, in at least one developing country, traditional teaching methods include flogging of students as a penalty for wrong answers.

Studies show that teachers in another country we visited do not receive adequate guidelines for preparing and conducting their work. The guidelines are abstract and emphasize content rather than procedure. Actual teaching practices result in word-by-word repetition by the class in unison following the teacher. Teachers yell out the words and students learn to associate loudness with correctness. Penmanship is carefully checked, and its importance is overly emphasized. Too much time is spent copying words, phrases, and numbers from the board into notebooks. Finally, creativity is not encouraged. We were told that these teaching methods seem fairly typical of developing countries.

With learning primarily by rote memorization, few students can apply the learned phrases and responses to situations other than those in which they were taught. Analytical skills, important in solving development problems, are not developed.

AID has funded projects to assist in improving the relevancy of teaching methods. The Educational Development project in Guatemala experimented with a new curriculum based on a problem-solving approach. Students learned by dealing with practical problems and solutions in a classroom situation. They were not exposed to theory. These efforts have met with some success, since students attending the pilot schools have performed at a higher level than students in other control schools. The curriculum is now being expanded to other schools in Guatemala.

Irrelevant curricula

Developing countries have curriculum needs different from those of developed countries. Curriculum content is an important element in any country, because it should embody the priorities and goals of the nation. Curricula in developing countries should foster development goals.

AID has been criticized for curriculum development in the Liberian project, Teacher Training Institutional Development and Support (1960-69), through which two rural teacher training institutes were established. Critics say that this project was maneuvered into using a syllabus and a teaching education curriculum that was suitable for the United States but not for Liberia. Teaching methods were taught which were quite different from those appropriate for children with tribal backgrounds. Also, the AID-financed Monrovia Consolidated School System project (1961-73) set up a curriculum which was also later criticized for being too American and not focusing on local needs.

However, AID has funded other curriculum development projects in Liberia with more positive results. The Education Materials Development project (1966-73) helped

--organize a set of Liberian curricula for grades one through twelve;

--establish a curriculum materials center as a resource for teachers, including a production unit;

--formulate a list of textbooks for the schools; and

--prepare new Liberian textbooks.

This project produced the first set of organized curricula for Liberian schools, the first curriculum materials center

in Africa, and several spinoffs. For instance, the Liberian Ministry of Education is now setting up other materials centers in each of its nine counties. Furthermore, representatives from other African countries (Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania) have visited this center to obtain ideas for setting up their own centers. An indirect result of the Liberian project was also the African Curriculum Organization formed in 1975. Composed of educators from various African countries, the organization holds annual meetings to discuss curriculum and educational matters.

Besides designing curricula relevant to development needs, country governments and external donors need to develop curricula to meet the particular needs of the rural poor. In Guatemala, for example, the Ministry of Education has required that the same curriculum be taught to urban and rural students and that the same subjects be taught in all primary schools for the same number of hours each year. Thus, because of the inflexibility of the curriculum, problems specific to rural learning needs are not adequately treated, and instruction is unrelated to the rural students' personal or community experiences.

Developing countries have begun using nonformal education to reach the rural masses with relevant educational content. In Liberia, the AID Rural Development Institute project is developing a program to give farmers academic training combined with a strong emphasis on practical fieldwork as related to small-farm development. The Rural Information Services project in that country will use radio to conduct basic literacy classes in the rural areas. A similar project, the previously cited Basic Village Education, has been successful in Guatemala.

Problems with textbooks

Tremendous shortages of textbooks are common in developing countries, while the textbooks that are available are often expensive, old, imported, and culturally irrelevant. Problems resulting from having too few books are compounded by the untrained teachers endemic to developing countries. Textbook writing, production, storage and distribution are also inadequate.

In Liberia, the Ministry of Education has compiled a prescribed textbook list for the country's schools. Only a very small percent of the student population, however, can afford to buy the textbooks. A Ministry official estimated that only three out of every 40 students in the capital city

have the prescribed textbooks, and in rural areas the problem is even more acute.

Illustrative of certain basic problems associated with textbooks are the results of the AID-funded Africa math programs (1961-74) in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. These projects produced math education textbooks, materials, and teacher training programs. The first set of Liberian elementary math books was developed and is now included in the Ministry's prescribed textbooks list.

The books are exemplary in many ways. They were designed to promote analytical thinking versus rote memorization, and they use Liberian examples and pictures. Culturally, therefore, the new math books are more relevant to Liberia's needs. Unfortunately, however, very few students have the textbooks, which are too expensive. And even if all the students could afford the books, not enough books are available.

At the curriculum materials center in Monrovia, we found that most of the reference books on the shelves were old books from the United States. For example, there were several U.S. and Western civilization history books, U.S. geography books, English literature books, etc. A visit to the library of Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute revealed the same. Neither library had a complete set of the textbooks officially prescribed for Liberian schools. However, some educators contend that students cannot learn to read unless they have some reading materials. Thus, on that premise, textbooks with irrelevant subjects may have a degree of usefulness as reading materials.

Textbook production, including machines and supplies, is also needed in developing countries. Workers need to be trained in production, machine repair, and other specific skills. Concerning an Education Materials Development project in Liberia, a 1970 evaluation report said

> "There are periodic breakdowns of most of the [Materials] Center's production equipment. Not only are there no replacements for broken and missing parts, but there is no local technician capable of making the proper repairs. There is no regular servicing schedule for equipment. Equipment is used until it breaks down."

Logistical support is also a potential problem, including proper storage facilities and vehicles in good repair. In

some instances, book supplies have been ruined because of climatic conditions and vermin infestation of warehouses.

Such disappointing experiences in Liberia must be fully considered in future planning for the AID Improved Efficiency of Learning project. That project, headquartered in Gbarnga, about 140 miles inland from Monrovia, is designed to produce programed instructional materials for students and teachers. Project implementation will rely heavily on logistical support, including reproduction machines, vehicle support, and dependable electricity. Problems affecting the adequacy of logistical support can slow down or even negate the success of the Improved Efficiency of Learning project unless carefully planned for.

Language choice is often a critical textbook issue in developing countries. In Guatemala, for example, a high proportion of the rural population speaks one of at least 23 major dialects. These indigenous rural groups have an 82-percent illiteracy rate compared to only 63 percent for the rural Spanish-speaking population. AID is currently beginning a bilingual education project in Guatemala.

Even beyond textbooks, schools in developing countries generally have limited supplies of any materials, including paper. A former Peace Corps volunteer teacher in Sierra Leone complained that she often had no paper. A staff member at the Liberian Ministry of Education complained that he had to use his own money to buy paper for official use.

LACK OF INFORMATION HINDERS PROJECT PLANNING

AID's effective planning of education projects for developing countries is stymied by the lack of sufficient information. In Guatemala, government information on education is incomplete, not up-to-date, and sometimes misleading. Although the education planning office did produce a series of yearbooks containing generally accurate descriptive information, no indepth analysis, and consequently no use, was made of the data. Information on enrollment and general system performance has been collected through 1975, but the series of publications ended with the 1972 edition, and no new yearbooks have been produced since then. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to document what has happened previously. The continual under-financing and under-staffing of the data collection unit reflect the low priority this area is given.

Liberian officials have recognized the need for a sound statistical base in education and conducted a nationwide survey to gather information. The results were published in April 1979. This was the first systematic, comprehensive effort to collect educational statistics in Liberia and will provide a basis for future decisions.

HIGHER EDUCATION-- A DEVELOPMENT TOOL

AID's education and human resources policy now being developed is intended to remedy former imbalances which directed more resources to secondary and higher education levels at the expense of basic education of the poorest of the poor.

Most of the current and planned AID education projects at the missions we visited were aimed at addressing the poor's access to education services. Although the Agency estimates that, worldwide, nearly half of the education and human resources development funds continue to go to various forms of higher education, we believe there must be a balance in efforts to provide assistance for postsecondary and pre-secondary education in developing countries.

In Peru, a number of projects assisting higher level institutions were carried out from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. However, the only recent project has been a small grant to the Graduate School of Business Administration, which ended in 1978.

In Liberia, AID funded two complementary projects in public administration during the 1970s: the Civil Service Development project and the Liberia Institute of Public Administration project. The former helped the Liberian Government establish a civil service system to improve management and personnel practices of all Government offices. The latter project assisted the Liberian Government in founding the Institute of Public Administration, which is primarily concerned with training middle-management workers in government and management skills. Both projects were terminated early because of internal AID pressure opposing the funding of higher level training in line with the New Directions Mandate. However, the organizations formed by these projects are playing a major role in helping the Government meet the demands of expanded, integrated rural development programs.

A Improved Rural Services project also builds upon these two projects. This new project is aimed at improving the

delivery of services to the rural and urban poor through decentralization of the Government administrative structure. It will involve short-term, practical, incountry training for middle- and top-level managers.

NEED FOR RECIPIENT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Greater involvement in planning

The Foreign Assistance Act authorizes the United States (through AID) to assist developing countries in improving their economies and the lives of their people. The actual development actions are to be promulgated and carried out by the developing countries. For this principle to work successfully, the recipient government and the people to whom the assistance is directed must understand and see a need for each external, donor-sponsored project. Furthermore, the recipient government and the people must truly want and have helped design the project and establish the development objectives. AID has sometimes followed the practice of designing, programing, and implementing development projects without full developing-country involvement. In many such cases, the development effort ends when the external assistance ceases.

Studying a newly initiated AID-sponsored project designed to upgrade the vocational training program at Booker T. Washington Institute in Liberia, we saw clear evidence of the need for recipient country participation. The Institute, founded in 1929, was operated as a college-prep school with a few vocational courses through 1953. In 1954, upon the Liberian Government's request, AID began a project to change the school's orientation from academics toward vocational and technical training. Upon completion of the project in 1965 without much recipient government involvement, the Institute was considered a viable school, producing graduates with predictable skills and performance capabilities. Over the next 9 years, however, the school deteriorated and was closed by the Government of Liberia in 1974 for one year.

Liberian Government officials advised us that the original project had had only a limited development impact, which they feel is characteristic of many AID projects. They said that after AID assistance ceases, a project is usually "self-destructive." In this instance, they told us no provisions to replace and maintain inventories had been established; trained staff members departed; the recipient government did not budget for recurring costs; and AID maintained no continuing presence associated with the project. The Institute

reverted to the old prep-school or academic posture, and graduates were not receiving technical training to ensure employment.

In 1975, however, two events displayed the Liberian Government's interest in addressing vocational/technical education as a whole. A National Council for Vocational and Technical Education and Training was established, composed of representatives of the Government and the AID Mission. The Government of Liberia delegated to the Council the authority and responsibility for coordinating all vocational and training activities in Liberia.

In addition, that year the recipient government again requested AID assistance to upgrade the vocational training program at Booker T. Washington Institute. AID agreed to do so using "lessons learned" and secured Liberian Government commitment by involving it in designing and managing the current project. The Government has made a commitment to financially support this project. A Liberian official at the Institute said, "We know that if we fail there [now], it's our fault. We now have the incentive to ensure that this project does not fail."

The shaky beginning but rather successful ending of the Basic Village Education project in Guatemala, a radio education effort, is another example of how recipient government and people participation directly influences a project's accomplishments. Generally considered one of the most successful AID-sponsored projects in Latin America, it faced serious problems in its early stages due primarily to a lack of participation and commitment by both the government and the rural Indian people. After 1 year, however, the government began supporting the project, and the village people began accepting the principle that education would increase their participation in the economic development of the country. The project subsequently became a pilot project for developers to study and use as a model in other developing countries. Even though U.S. assistance for the Basic Village Education project has ended, the Government of Guatemala continues to fund the expanded project and is now considering erecting another radio transmitter to complement the two constructed with AID funds.

The Monrovia Consolidated School System project in Liberia (1961-73) is an AID project that did not fully succeed. This project established the administrative apparatus, trained teachers, built schools, and formulated curricula for a consolidated school district in Monrovia. The school district is still operating but very ineffectively so.

Trained teachers, supplies, and working equipment are limited, because the Government does not adequately meet recurring costs. This project was one of many terminated AID projects which, according to the AID Auditor General, failed due to the lack of recipient-government commitment.

By contrast, another Liberian education project now being implemented does have recipient-government support. Top Liberian Government officials have been thoroughly involved in the design and implementation of the Improved Efficiency of Learning project and now have a vested interest in its success. During the design stage, Liberians and AID officials visited similar projects in the Philippines and Indonesia, which increased Liberian commitment. A steering committee chaired by a Liberian is directing project implementation.

One Liberian summed up host-government commitment, saying, "Even if the U.S. were to pull out tomorrow, the Liberians would continue this project." Evidence of this is the fact that, despite many budget cuts in many departments by the Government of Liberia because of increased expenditures in 1979, the Government budget for this project was not touched. Thus, project success seems promising because of the recipient-government commitment and participation.

Recipient country's absorptive capacity

Most developing countries want to support educational development. The governments, however, generally lack the administrative and management capabilities and the resources needed to initiate and maintain projects, deficiencies which affect the timely progress of projects. Lack of local resources causes, for example, shortages of textbooks, materials, and supplies as well as inadequate number of trained teachers. With local resources so scarce, recipient governments cannot place enough attention on all external assistance efforts and concurrently administer their own internal activities. These difficulties affect AID assistance.

Resource limitations are particularly evident in Peru, where, since 1970, the economy has had large fiscal and balance-of-payment deficits, an accelerating rate of inflation, a declining rate of growth in domestic production, and decreasing real income. Since May 1978, several policy measures have been initiated to improve the situation, including a financial program calling for significant cutbacks in public spending. In education, financing is not keeping pace with enrollment, thereby decreasing expenditures for each student.

A Government educational reform has been underway in Peru since 1972. According to AID, the major problem impeding successful implementation of the reform in a reasonable time is the lack of adequate human and financial resources. For example, problems occurred at all levels of education in developing a curriculum relevant to individual school districts, zones, and regions. This was largely due to inadequately trained teachers.

Limited resources for recurring costs

Many education programs involve relatively small amounts of capital, but require major increases in operational costs. The countries we visited frequently do not have the financial resources to meet these recurring costs. For example, new schools may be built, but the recipient governments often do not have the funds for long-range school maintenance. AID may build teacher-training institutes, but recipient-government economic policies sometimes make retention of trained teachers difficult.

In one proposed project for preschool education in Peru, the Government of Peru is to meet local costs associated with vehicle repair and maintenance, training, materials, and personnel costs. Both the Government and AID are optimistic that when the project terminates in several years, the Government will be able to finance this expanded preschool program. We were told, however, that AID will assist with recurring costs, if necessary.

However, AID policy allows post-project funding for recurring costs only on an exception basis. If not carefully planned, such financing can have bad effects by (1) creating a long-term dependence on AID, (2) encouraging recipient governments to become overextended financially, (3) providing a deterrent to recipients to developing alternative financing or adjusting priorities, and (4) increasing the danger that projects will be undertaken without the serious support of the governments.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational assistance to developing countries must overcome various obstacles if more substantive achievement is to take place. Crucial to success is the commitment of the host governments. In its present and future projects, AID should insist on host-government support and commitment. This should be followed up by mutual collaboration in project planning, implementation, and evaluation between AID, contractors, and host governments.

Management capabilities and financial resources affect host-government involvement. We believe that AID, in arriving at judgments of the overall level of support to be provided to nations, should carefully consider each country's ability to absorb assistance. Based on our review and observations of education and training programs, that position appears valid.

Factors relating to irrelevant educational content and approach must also be considered. The greatest needs for curricula relevant to development goals are in the rural areas. The rural poor need basic education and life-skills training.

Problems associated with textbooks in developing countries occur in several important dimensions. Tremendous shortages of books exist. The available books are usually too expensive and/or culturally irrelevant for students in developing countries. Developing countries need people trained in textbook writing, materials production, and other related skills. Beyond this, however, they need basic logistical support to store and distribute textbooks.

In designing and programing education and human resource projects in developing countries, AID must limit assistance to the absorptive capacities of the recipient governments and people. We also believe, as experience has demonstrated, that the recipient governments and people must be extensively involved in all development phases. Specifically, they must be willing to commit their own resources to the same development endeavor as AID. A step toward success is reflected in the attitude of people in developing countries that projects are their projects, and if they fail, it is their fault.

We recommend that the AID Administrator

--increasingly involve host governments in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of U.S.-sponsored projects; and

--place greater emphasis on the host-country ability to carry out projects through the implementation phase, as well as the financial ability to sustain recurring costs.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSE

AID officials maintain that the past decade has seen substantial progress in increasing recipient-government involvement in all phases of U.S.-supported projects. They

state that no project is initiated today that does not have considerable host-country support and participation from the outset. As we have noted in this chapter, this involvement appears to be essential to project success, and the AID education projects which we reviewed seem to be emphasizing this involvement to a greater degree than before. Accordingly, we urge AID to continue this emphasis, with the ultimate objective of improving host-country ability to implement projects and sustain recurring costs.

CHAPTER 4

TRAINING-A DEVELOPMENT NEED

Technology and management skills are vital to effective development. One of the few potential resources available to all developing countries is people. Yet often they are unable to apply the technology and skill needed to effect changes necessary for development. AID recognizes the need to transfer skills to people in developing countries and, therefore, commits considerable funding to training. We commend AID for its efforts to transfer knowledge and skills, but found little organized management applied to the Agency's participant training activities. It is difficult to assess the accomplishments of AID training efforts.

The principal goal of AID participant training is to develop the minds and abilities of people who will (1) actively participate in implementation of U.S. development efforts in their country and (2) continue progressive development after the United States and/or other external donors cease assistance in particularly important areas.

Currently, AID estimates that 190,000 people 1/ have received training in the United States or a third country through the Agency participant training program during the last three decades. AID-sponsored training has ranged from short seminars to degree completion programs. Most training is provided in the participants' native countries or in the United States.

Training in recipient countries is limited primarily to on-the-job training of local nationals working under an AID development project--usually in the functional areas of agriculture and nutrition, population and health, and education and human resources. Most of the training in the United States and third countries is also AID-project-related in a general way. Much of it, however, is more related to general-purpose education than to specific technical skills required in AID projects.

1/Includes participants from Marshall Plan countries and nations which no longer have AID programs.

PARTICIPANT TRAINING: UNITED STATES AND THIRD COUNTRIES

Over the last decade, AID participant training has declined annually from over 13,500 in 1969 to 6,721 participants in training in 1978. They have received academic or technical training funded by nearly every bureau and office in AID. Participants are selected by their government and the AID mission or by their government and a U.S. contractor. The contractors include hundreds of U.S. universities, organizations, and private firms which work and report independently of each other.

Officially, the AID Bureau for Development Support, Office of International Training (OIT) is responsible for managing the participant training program. In recent years, however, the OIT has been unable to gather complete and accurate data needed to manage and monitor participant training. OIT officials are not certain that data on all AID-sponsored participants reaches them. Furthermore, the Office seems unable to process all the data provided by the various AID bureaus, offices, and missions along with U.S. universities, organizations, and private firms.

For a number of years, a former Agency employee questioned the correctness of the ratio of participants who returned to their homelands upon completion of their training abroad, as computed by the OIT. We found that data reported to OIT by overseas missions supports the Office computation that less than one percent of the participants do not return home upon completion of training. (See table below.)

	1978	Cumulative (completed)
Number returning home (AID missions)	3,162	93,009 (note a)
Number not returning home (AID missions)	25	596 (note a)
Percent of nonreturnees (mission data accumulated and reported by OIT)	0.8%	0.6%

a/Cumulative total, all years of operation, from 1978 reports from currently active AID missions overseas.

We also learned, however, that the data reported by overseas missions principally covers only those participants

directly funded by the missions or AID/Washington (regional bureaus, and other headquarters offices). The data does not generally cover participants programed by contractors.

In addition, mission nonreturn data is based only on known nonreturnees, not on a comparison of known returnees with all participants less those in training. Therefore, the less-than-one-percent nonreturn ratio reported by AID does not represent all the participants or all actual returns home.

In late 1975, AID personnel analyzed the nonreturn participant problem, and concluded that the nonreturn rate was much larger than one percent. They also found that AID had not had the "complete training picture" due to the fragmented nature of the training program in Washington and in the field. They said that prior attempts to gather statistics on participants handled by contractors received "little support" or were ignored. They also said that some of the contractors readily admitted to a higher percentage of nonreturns. The reasons they gave for the high nonreturn rate were as follows.

1. Most of the contract participants are in the United States on full scholarships and are not civil servants with positions awaiting their return home.

2. Many of the contract participants are undergraduates who eventually receive other scholarships for graduate and post-graduate studies. Although some do ultimately return to their countries, others find difficulty leaving the United States after eight or nine years of living here.

AID has recently initiated actions aimed at alleviating deficiencies in the participant training information system and the organizational structure of training activities. In addition, staff of the AID Auditor General is currently reviewing AID management of the participant training program and is questioning whether current training policy and procedures are adequate.

AID headquarters is not carrying out established participant training operating procedures

Overall instructions were developed in the mid-1970s, establishing methods to account for participant trainees supported by AID. All instructions have not been followed, however, and all participants have not been fully accounted for.

AID personnel in OIT have also developed a number of documents and procedures to improve the ability of the Office to account for all participants. For instance, a document (form DSP-66a) was developed in 1976 to specifically identify each foreigner applying for exchange visitor status in the United States under AID sponsorship. The form also identifies the AID office or contractor initiating the training. A copy is retained by the participant for U.S. exit and re-entry purposes; other copies are distributed to various U.S. Government offices, including the Immigration and Naturalization Service and OIT.

The appropriate AID missions are to be notified of the expected arrival home of participants trained in the United States. The missions are then required to verify that the participants did arrive home and to inquire periodically about how participants apply the AID training. Such control and followup procedures are not fully utilized by AID. Not all AID-sponsored participants use the form to apply for exchange visitor status in the United States. Furthermore, the copies received by OIT are not processed or used as controls over participants in the United States. Neither are cables regularly sent notifying missions that participants are scheduled to arrive home.

While our review was in process, the AID Acting Administrator issued a memorandum calling to the attention of top AID officials the lack of up-to-date data on the participants being trained in the United States. He said, furthermore, "we need to know and be able to prove when participants return home," and he reminded the top officials that such information was currently "often neither available nor internally consistent."

Training accountability at AID missions is incomplete and ineffective

The AID missions in Liberia, Guatemala, and Peru maintain records and regularly attempt to remain in contact with participant returnees. However, mission records and contacts

are limited usually to participants (1) whom the host government and the mission had selected and (2) on whom OIT had furnished data to the mission.

The missions in Peru and Guatemala, for instance, do not maintain records and make reports on and contacts with all participants trained, respectively, under the AID-supported Latin American Scholarship Program at American Universities (LASPAU) and programs administered by the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. Records on participants recruited and processed by a large contractor are maintained at appropriate functional offices at missions, such as Population and Health. However, they are not included in mission reports to the Office of OIT. Therefore, no complete data is readily available on the ratio of nonreturnees to all participants. Neither do the missions have complete listings of Peruvians and Guatemalans who are recipients of AID-financed training, from which periodic surveys could be made to evaluate the benefits of the training.

The AID Mission in Liberia maintains a listing of participants trained under the African Scholarship Program at American Universities (ASPAU), the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD), and the African Scholarship Association (AFSA). The African-American Institute, an AID contractor based in New York City, functions as a service and placement organization and recruits and processes participants for all the programs. It also provides missions with the names of recruited participants, which the missions accepts "for the records." We found that the Liberian Mission does not verify the completeness of the list and does not maintain files on those participants.

Institutional training programs

In the past, scholarship programs such as LASPAU and AFGRAD have been directed primarily at institution building--i.e., training college-educated administrators of all types and helping universities develop faculties trained in key fields, to promote particular local universities as "centers of excellence." Currently, as part of the shift from institution building to the New Directions-type activities specified in 1973 legislation, the AID missions will need to be more involved in these training programs. AID mission officials seem willing to undertake the greater involvement required to insure that AID-sponsored training is more in line with development efforts programed by the missions. However, the manner in which more involvement will be accomplished by mission officials has not been fully developed.

The latest reports submitted to AID on AFGRAD participants indicate that this program has a nonreturn ratio of about 10 percent. Recent LASPAU surveys indicate that 98 percent of the LASPAU participants returned to Latin America, but only 78 percent of them graduated from U.S. universities.

Labor union program

AIFLD, with AID sponsorship, has assisted in training Latin Americans in trade union-related courses in the United States at the rate of about 250 annually since 1962. Most participants receive short-term training; however, about 15 participants receive academic training each year. We were advised that virtually all of these labor-oriented participants return to Latin America and that 90-95 percent of them remain in the field of organized union activity.

BRAIN DRAIN

The negative impact of educated people moving from developing countries to developed countries is referred to internationally as brain drain. In the following discussion of brain drain, such movement involves the education and skills acquired by participants in various AID-financed training activities in the United States and third countries. AID does not know the extent to which AID-supported participants have remained in their native countries as active contributors to economic development in general, and to U.S.-sponsored projects, more specifically.

General concerns on brain drain

In June 1978, the Secretary General of the United Nations issued a report entitled, "The 'Brain Drain' Problem: Outflow of Trained Personnel from Developing to Developed Countries." The report noted the exodus of 300,000 people--scientists, engineers, physicians and surgeons--from developing to developed countries in the 1960s and early 1970s. The report also referred to some prior work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which concluded that the "absolute size of the flow of trained personnel was not always the crucial problem" but that in some developing countries "the loss of a handful of skilled workers can be critical."

Another study by the U.N. Conference reported that most students and some professionals working in developed countries plan to return home eventually. However, the study also stated that "in spite of the proportion of actual or

potential 'returnees' [to developing countries], the loss of those who do not return can have unfortunate repercussions for developing countries."

In a report prepared for the House International Relations Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs, the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service pointed to brain drain as a symptom of underdevelopment. That report also referred to a December 1975 article which noted that "despite the often catastrophic shortage of skilled personnel in their homelands, a large number of African students studying at West European and American countries choose to remain abroad after graduation."

Ministry officials in one developing country we visited in June and July 1979 were very concerned about the loss of educated and skilled people to developed countries. That country's government in recent years has become very interested in involving all citizens in the development of the local economy and thereby improving the lives of the poor. As a major task, officials see the need to encourage the thousands of citizens living and working abroad to return home and contribute to national development. A Deputy minister said that thousands are working abroad temporarily; however, if they were at home, they could have a favorable impact on the future of the country.

In two developing countries we visited, U.S. officials said that a high percentage of the people who obtain visas to the United States probably remain in the United States for extended periods. Substantiating a statistic we previously paraphrased from a U.N. report, one official said that more citizens of that Latin American country were practicing medicine in the United States than in that country.

Some developing-country officials view the movement of skills within national borders as a form of brain drain. A ministry official in a country we visited was concerned over the government's loss of needed talent to private industry in the country. He said that the government could not compete with the pay scale offered by private firms, so that many citizens trained abroad worked for only a short period with the government before migrating to industry.

AID training's impact on brain drain

Nearly every development project AID has designed in recent years has a training component, through which developing-country participants are selected and trained. The

participants are to be technicians, trainers of additional local trainees, and eventually managers of key activities in their home governments.

Some projects, such as a manpower development project in Liberia, involve only the training of participants. These projects are designed to develop middle-level managers capable of serving in government ministries to continue U.S.-initiated development efforts.

Considerable benefits to specific AID-initiated development projects and overall national development have resulted from AID participant training. Those benefits are difficult to measure, however, and nearly any level of brain drain tends to diminish the effectiveness of AID training efforts.

Training accomplishments

As previously demonstrated, AID does not know the total number of trained participants that return home and actively contribute to implementation of AID-funded projects and overall economic and social development in the participants' native countries. However, many participants have returned home and are teaching school, working to improve farming techniques and health and sanitation conditions, and working at various levels of government.

Pursuant to agreements between the developing-country governments and participants, each participant selected by the government and the AID mission is committed to a specific period of employment in the country following training. Typical formal commitments call for at least two times the length of the training to be spent in the field or job for which the participant will be trained. In the countries we visited, such commitments had been generally fulfilled, and in a few instances, the governments transferred participants into different positions before the commitments were completely fulfilled. A June 1979 survey of 288 Liberians who completed AID-sponsored training in education before 1973 revealed that

--232 are employed by the Liberian Government,

--22 are working in the private sector,

--21 are deceased, and

--13 are living abroad (12 of whom are in the United States).

The survey showed that over 80 percent of the participants had remained with the Government in high positions.

Each year AID missions enclose brief summaries of participant accomplishments with their annual returned participant report. Following are some examples of success stories reported between 1975-78.

Pakistan

A participant serves as Director, National Institute of Psychology under the Pakistan Ministry of Education. She is now responsible for planning the programs of the Peoples Open University and in-service teacher education for about 1.5 million primary and secondary teachers. Under AID sponsorship, she earned a Ph.D degree at Indiana University.

Nepal

A participant earned a M.S. degree in Educational Administration at the University of Wisconsin under AID sponsorship. Since then, he has had a strong influence in Nepalese education from the positions of (1) Deputy Director, Department of Education (1964-68), (2) Director General, Education Directorate (1968-70), (3) Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education (1971-75), and (4) Member Secretary, National Education Committee (1976-present). Since 1977, he has also been an advisor to the UNESCO Regional Office of Education in Bangkok.

Bangladesh

After earning a master's degree in horticulture at the American University of Beirut under AID sponsorship, a participant became Assistant Director of the Horticulture Development Board. In 1977, he was charged with preparing and coordinating a program to increase production of vegetables and spices. In this capacity, he was responsible for training 20,400 growers and 800 trainers in Bangladesh.

Swaziland

In 1978, two participants returned to Swaziland from training in the United States. Since returning, one was named Commissioner of Income Tax (his predecessor had been appointed Auditor General). The other participant became Director of Agriculture.

Uruguay

In early 1977, a participant was named Head, Department of Regional Development, Secretariat of Planning, Coordination, and Information (formerly, Office of Budget and Planning). He is also employed by the Joint Economic Committee to make economic studies to help producers improve production and provide them with technically sound bases for decisionmaking. The participant, a former technician in the Ministry of Economy, had earned a master's degree in development economics at the University of Chicago.

Chile

A Chilean small farmer and President of Cooperative Agricola Avicovalle in Chile visited extension services in various cities in the southwest United States under an AID-sponsored 6-week observation program in 1975. Another Chilean, a technical advisor to the Ovalle Cooperative, participated in a workshop on cooperative management at the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives in mid-1974. The mission reported that these participants are actively helping their community improve living conditions and general welfare.

Success stories reported by overseas missions usually deal more with participant attainment of higher positions in government than the citation of specific benefits to the poor. The attainment of high government positions is not a true measurement of successful development affecting the lives of the poor. It only indicates a means by which development may be influenced to ultimately improve the state of the poor.

Negative effect of brain drain

In one Latin American country where the AID mission did not have data on either the returnees or nonreturnees under the LASPAU program, we requested that mission officials determine the current location of eight participants whose names we provided. The officials contacted the local universities with which five of them were last associated and learned that all five were living abroad.

At another mission, where records of regular followups on the whereabouts and occupations of participants are not maintained, we were told that about 25 percent of the participants depart the country after fulfilling their work

commitments to the government. This statistic was qualified with the opinion that most live abroad temporarily, intending ultimately to return home.

We believe that the difficulty which AID missions and some host governments experience in selecting qualified persons for overseas technical or advanced academic training is an indicator of how serious the impact of any degree of brain drain is upon developing countries. We saw a number of instances in which the actual number of participants selected and trained was less than the number determined needed and originally programed. The reason for the adjustment was that qualified participants were not available for training abroad. The need for educated and skilled people in developing countries usually exceeds the universe from which participant selections can be made.

Thus the shortage of available qualified people, coupled with the great need for skilled people, is aggravated by migration to developed countries. Even though numerical statistics on the magnitude of brain drain are not easy to compile, some AID officials see the need to train three people for every position, job, or task required for successful development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Technology and skills are necessary to improve developing country abilities to bring about changes, to cope with change, and to influence the manner in which those changes affect their lives. Manpower is one of the few resources available for development everywhere. So training--the transfer of skills--is appropriate to pursue in development assistance.

Recognizing that every poor person cannot be reached by the developed-country donors, AID uses the training-of-trainers approach as well as training of workers. AID hopes for the multiplier effect of training trainers in management to reach the poor majority in developing countries.

We agree with the AID decision to emphasize training as a component to nearly every development project. We believe, however, that AID should be able to more effectively evaluate the accomplishments of the training funded from appropriations for foreign assistance.

Fully aware that the transfer of skills from developing countries to the United States or other industrial nations is detrimental to development efforts, AID should be able to

document the progress of all AID participants--at least through the participant's return home and subsequent employment during his obligated pay-back period. This documention would require close coordination between AID contractors and training officers at overseas missions. This information would assist in evaluating the applicability and effectiveness of prior training efforts, and could serve as a management tool to identify strengths and weaknesses in the participant training program. It could also serve as a basis for joining with developing-country governments to develop a more orderly movement of skills among nations.

For better accountability of AID-sponsored participant trainees and overall management of AID training activities, we recommend that the Administrator, Agency for International Development, initiate action necessary to

--account for the U.S. arrivals and departures of participant trainees and the application overseas of skills acquired through AID-sponsored training, and

--develop and establish an effective system and determine the organizational structure best suited for gathering, assimilating, and reporting participant training information as a management tool for AID headquarters and overseas missions.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSE

AID officials informed us that consultants and contractors have been studying the participant training information system, related information requirements and record-keeping, and improvements needed in communication to and from the Office of International Training. We believe that these efforts are a necessary first step toward improving accountability for the return of AID-sponsored participants to their homelands after training. We also believe that, to make fullest use of the improved information system as a management tool, AID should introduce further refinements of the AID participant training program, including an effective training evaluation system, once the information system is operating reliably.

CHAPTER 5

SCOPE OF REVIEW

We reviewed legislation pertinent to U.S. assistance for education and human resources in developing countries. We reviewed and analyzed data relevant to planning, designing, and implementing education and human resource programs at AID headquarters in Washington, D.C., and held discussions with appropriate Agency officials.

During June and July 1979, we visited AID missions in Liberia, Peru, and Guatemala, where we reviewed data pertinent to education efforts in general and specific AID-funded projects. In these countries, we also talked with appropriate U.S. and recipient-country officials, as well as those of international and regional organizations. In each country, we visited selected project sites and observed project implementation efforts in progress. We selected Liberia, Peru, and Guatemala for review, because they are recipients of significant AID-financed education-and training-related assistance. Furthermore, current AID programing indicates that such assistance will continue in those countries in the future.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON D.C. 20523

February 25, 1980

ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. J. K. Fasick
Director
International Division
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Fasick:

I have been asked to reply to your letter of January 17, 1980, transmitting the GAO draft report, "U.S. Efforts to Educate and Train the Poor in Developing Countries". We in A.I.D. appreciate the opportunity to comment on the report as well as the time your staff spent in consultation with A.I.D. personnel in the course of studying the background for the report and in discussing preliminary drafts of the audit.

The report contains a number of principles of good development practice which we can readily endorse and we agree in general with most of the conclusions and recommendations mentioned in the report; however, a number of observations do not sufficiently distinguish between past and current Agency practices and the report, therefore, does not always represent an accurate picture of the Agency's present efforts in education development. The enclosure to this letter presents both general and specific comments which may prove helpful to you in readying the report for publication. We will, of course, be pleased to discuss any of those comments with you or to provide additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Sander Levin
Assistant Administrator for
Development Support

ENCLOSURE:
A.I.D. Comments - Draft Audit Report

A.I.D. Comments on the Draft GAO Report
"U.S. Efforts to Educate and Train the Poor in Developing Countries"

Introduction

The scope of this study is quite broad and appears to lack focus. A preliminary draft stated that the study was an assessment of how effectively A.I.D. uses monies appropriated for education and training in LDCs; the present draft does not have a statement of overall purpose. Despite the broad scope of the study, several key features of A.I.D.'s efforts in education are not discussed. For example, the report does not treat the matter of work force. No program can be carried out without experienced, knowledgeable people. At a minimum, an analysis of the total program should look at the number of people employed by A.I.D. in its education assistance program, their experience and training, and where they are deployed. Also, there was no analysis of the DS/ED program and its influence on the Agency's education program. Left unexamined are questions about the organization and function of a technical central bureau.

These omissions and the small sample of countries visited would not be so crucial if the report did not purport to examine the total Agency effort to educate and train the poor in developing countries. A thorough review of the program would seem to require that the GAO examine all essential components and how they interact.

GAO response:

We have included a statement of overall purpose in Chapter 1 on page 2. We believe that a separate review would best address the effectiveness of the AID staff and organizations involved in education assistance. As an integral part of our work, we reviewed the general functions and recent efforts of the Office of Education. However, we did not concentrate our review on this relatively small portion of the AID Education and Human Resources budget (about 6 percent in FY 1980). With about half the Office's budget in recent years devoted to only one project, "Educational Technology," the office did not appear to be a major programmer of education assistance. Therefore, we focused our efforts on mission design, implementation and evaluation of AID education projects.

General Comments

We agree in general with the conclusions and recommendations listed in the report (pp. iii-iv, 18-20, 32-33). However, GAO's recognition that "the Agency has begun to give serious attention to many areas discussed in this report," does not do justice to current Agency practice in the areas mentioned in the study. For example, the statement is made that "A.I.D. admits little coordination takes place." It is not clear who represents A.I.D. in this case. Nor is it clear what level of coordination the audit team is recommending. A.I.D. has established the Country Development Strategy Statement process which requires that each mission exchange plans, programs and project ideas among sectors. The expressed intent of this CDSS exercise is "to optimize the use of limited resources and abundant experience" within each mission and within the Agency as a whole.

GAO response:

We have modified the statement on little coordination to indicate the general sources of this observation.

While we recognize that the CDSS is intended to promote coordination and better use of limited AID resources, we found little evidence that mission staffs we visited fully utilize cross-sector planning in generating development projects.

Host government involvement. A.I.D. has made substantial progress over the past 10 years in increasing recipient government involvement in the identification, design, implementation and evaluation of U.S. supported projects. No project is initiated today that does not have considerable support and participation from host countries from the beginning. On this point the report is not always clear whether it is commenting on past or current Agency practice.

GAO response:

At the end of Chapter 3, in responding to AID comments on recipient government involvement, we acknowledge the progress made in recent years.

Donor coordination. A.I.D. has always supported close coordination with other donors whenever possible. The project development process includes a careful analysis of what other donors are doing in the field. Also, frequent formal and informal exchanges both in Washington and at the country level are encouraged and supported. A.I.D. is presently involved in several jointly-funded projects with UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank in the education sector. At the same time it should be noted that each donor agency has special objectives and emphases, planning cycles within agencies differ considerably, and most other donor agencies have relatively small field staffs, where the bulk of A.I.D. planning occurs.

Use of prior experience. Improvements can and have been made in the extent to which A.I.D. makes use of its prior experience. The relatively recent establishment of an easily accessible data bank on A.I.D. projects (DS/DIU) is improving the ability of field personnel to obtain information systematically on prior Agency experience. In a less systematic fashion A.I.D. education professionals in the field in concert with their regional bureau technical backstops and the DSB Education Office have usually managed to stay current with Agency practice and to draw upon results of former experience. The report is inconsistent on this point of prior experience in that it places a premium on innovation, criticizes A.I.D. for earlier mistakes of attempting to graft onto LDCs what were home-grown U.S. solutions and then faults the Agency for not effectively using prior experience.

GAO response:

As we noted on page 16, mission officials told us that they do not routinely use the DS/DIU data bank to gather background data on prior AID experience. If this is due to the relative newness of this information system, we suggest that regional bureau and mission officials familiarize their staff with access procedures and the kind of data available. The point of our observation on using prior experience is that in some cases, AID seems not to have built on past projects where possible, partly because of incomplete project files or failure to consult AID data banks. For balance, we have cited instances where AID has used its experience effectively, e.g. in the Booker T. Washington Institute project (see page 30).

Reporting. It is unclear whether the final recommendation on page 19 is requesting a special report to Congress over and above A.I.D.'s normal reporting requirements. We do not agree that an additional report on program development and donor coordination is necessary or beneficial. Education projects rarely lend themselves to annual reports on positive and negative outcomes. However, the Administrator has strongly emphasized the evaluation of Agency activities and evaluation findings will continue to be shared with Congress.

GAO response:

We have deleted the final recommendation in lieu of language summarizing AID's position on donor coordination and our belief that AID should give it a closer look. On evaluation of AID activities, we heartily concur with the Acting Administrator's cited observation that reports need to focus more on AID's impact on the people--the ends of development--and less on intermediate activities.

Training. More specific comments by the GAO on A.I.D.'s participant training efforts are contained in Mr. Fasick's letter of January 4, 1980 to the Administrator. The A.I.D. response to that letter should be available about the same time as the reply to the draft audit report.

Specific Comments

The report should consistently refer to A.I.D.'s education policy paper as a proposed policy paper. At times the report refers to it as an official Agency policy.

On page 17, the report cites the lack of AID/Peace Corps coordination in the two Latin American countries visited; GAO found no evidence of present AID/Peace Corps collaboration in Peru because the Peace Corps left Peru in 1975.

GAO response:

Reference to Peru deleted.

The discussion of coordination under cross sector planning is unclear. The recommended level of coordination (in A.I.D. or among other donors, in Washington or in the developing countries) is not clear in the discussion on page 15.

The report, page 19, implies that A.I.D. project managers do not look at the past before planning projects but no evidence is presented to substantiate the comment.

GAO response:

Recommendation reworded to indicate the need for AID project managers to collect and maintain information. See pages 15 and 16 for citations of where they do not research background information in generating new projects.

The comment about the Acting A.I.D. Administrator on page 16 should be dated.

What evidence does the GAO audit team have for commenting that "A.I.D. has sometimes followed the practice of designing, programing and implementing development projects without full developing country involvement"? (page 29) None is stated in the report.

GAO response:

See p. 29 (Booker T. Washington Institute project) and p. 30 (Monrovia Consolidated School System project) for examples of this practice.

It is not entirely clear on page 29 whether the report is quoting Liberians or commenting on its own. This should be clarified and substantiated if a GAO comment.

On page 31 the last sentence of the fourth paragraph is unclear. What difficulty is the report referring to?

The report states that public administration projects in Liberia were terminated early because of "internal pressures", page 28. What does this statement mean?

Page 35, last para, 3rd sentence: This sentence is a bit confusing since it uses the word "institutional" as opposed to a specific A.I.D. project. Often specific A.I.D. project training is institutional training; the correct word may be "general".

Page 36, 3rd para: The absense of complete and accurate data is not the only impediment to the OIT responsibility for "managing" the participant training program. The OIT role needs re-definition. The GAO might have referrred here, as it does elsewhere, to the fragmentation of the implementation of participant training in A.I.D., large portions of which OIT does not "manage".

Page 36, Table: We are pleased to see the revised table which indicates that the data as reported by overseas missions supports the computation that only a small percentage of participants do not return home upon completion of their training.

Page 37: The comments which follow the table are misleading in that it states that only directly funded participants are covered and that "the data does not generally cover participants programmed by contractors". The GAO examination of the three missions visited may have lead it to this conclusion but it is contrary to regulation. The requirement in Handbook 10 does not specify any distinction and over the years all participants were expected to be reported. This point can undoubtedly be supplemented with a specific reminder and should be. The true weakness is the continuing inability to be certain just which contract participants were not included in past mission reports.

Page 37. The GAO quite properly alludes, although without detail, to actions which A.I.D. has initiated aimed at alleviating deficiencies in its participant training information system and organizational structure. The bulk of the discussion on these topics is contained in its separate letter to the Administrator for which a response has been prepared. However the GAO here also refers to a current AID/AG review and states that it "is questioning the adequacy" of current training policy and procedures. We have not yet seen any report by the AG and are not able to predict its findings.

Page 38: The discussion of arrival and departure control procedures is a very brief portion of a larger subject. At present the DSP-66a documents (a certificate of eligibility for an exchange visitor status, using J-1 visa) are not able to be processed into the existing computerized system. A recent contractor study has made a recommendation that a new Information System be designed in which these documents would become a major source document.

Page 40, re The Brain Drain: The entire discussion of the brain drain leads to an exaggerated impression. The proportion of A.I.D. participants to the world-wide brain drain process is minimal at most. For example, there are reportedly over 235,000 foreign academic students in the U.S., of which A.I.D. has about 2,000. Even so, we share the recognition that every reasonable effort should be made to prevent the loss of even one and A.I.D. is taking steps to strengthen its information system to assist in this effort.

Page 41. We were surprised that the GAO cited one Ministry official in one country who was concerned that his government lost some talent to private industry in his country. This is not a brain drain problem as generally understood and should be deleted.

GAO response:

We agree that in the long run, because the individual remains in his homeland, this problem is not generally understood as brain drain. However, we included this official's observation to illustrate a concern of some host governments--that in the short run, talent migration to the private sector can delay national development efforts as seriously as emigration.

Page 43. The list of 288 Liberians who had been trained by A.I.D. prior to 1973 showed 13 living abroad, but there was no citation as to whether or not they had originally returned and fulfilled their commitment to their government.

GAO response:

Regardless of whether the individuals fulfilled their commitments to their government, their emigration has a negative effect on the national economy and diminishes the skilled work force.

APPENDIX I

Page 45. The continuing need for training relates to a great many conditions in the host country, including, significantly, population growth To relate this complex situation to the brain drain is too simple and is presented without evidence.

Page 45. We disagree with the notion of training three people for every position attributed to "some A.I.D. officials." There is certainly no scientific basis for this view and the costs of such training are not discussed.